

Community Resilience Toolkit For Roscommon



**Public Participation
Network** Roscommon



Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin
Roscommon
County Council



**Healthy
Roscommon**

1 What is Community Resilience?

Community resilience is the ability of a community to adapt, survive, and thrive in the face of emergencies, disasters, and long-term challenges. It reflects how well individuals, families, organizations, and local systems can work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions—whether caused by natural hazards, public health crises, or other emergencies. Resilient communities not only bounce back but also learn and grow stronger from each experience.

For Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), fostering resilience means building strong relationships, ensuring access to resources, and promoting inclusive preparedness across all populations. It includes identifying local risks, understanding vulnerabilities, and empowering residents to take action before disaster strikes. By promoting communication, trust, and collaboration among community members and local partners, CERTs play a key role in increasing readiness and reducing the impacts of emergencies.

This toolkit is designed to support CERTs in strengthening community resilience by providing practical tools, guidance, and examples. Whether you're engaging neighbourhoods, planning exercises, or coordinating response efforts, this resource will help you build a safer, more connected, and more adaptable community—one that is ready to meet challenges head-on and recover quickly and equitably.



What does a Resilient Community Look Like?



They are aware of risks that may affect them and how vulnerable they are to those risks.



They identify existing skills, knowledge and resources within the community to prepare for and deal with, the consequences of an emergency.



They work together in a co-ordinated way to complement the work of the local emergency services, local authority and utilities providers before, during and after an emergency.

Communities in county Roscommon are strong, interconnected, and resourceful. Yet in times of crisis such as extreme weather events, pandemics, or traumatic events even the most resilient communities can feel overwhelmed. The Community Resilience Toolkit is designed to help Roscommon communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from crisis events, drawing on your unique local knowledge, shared values, and learning from evidence-based practices that have helped other communities across the world.

This toolkit is focus on supporting a wellbeing and psychological approach as core components of community resilience, using a Psychological First Aid (PFA) to guide the actions laid out in this toolkit. It is designed to be a practical and usable guide for local groups, volunteers, and community leaders to organise, communicate, and care for one another in the face of challenge.



What's the Purpose?

This toolkit is designed to be a step by step guide to help your community to produce an emergency response plan.



It will help you to identify and develop good practice that keep your community safe.



It will ensure no one is left behind – particularly the elderly, isolated individuals, migrants, people with disabilities, and those with complex needs.



It will empower your community build local capacity and response strategies before a crisis strikes.



It will embed Psychological First Aid principles into everyday community practice to help to support the health and wellbeing of communities in times of crisis.



It will provide simple, actionable tools to respond effectively to emergencies, especially where access to services is delayed or disrupted.



Offer a holistic, community based approach to wellbeing that blends international best practice with the values of shared responsibility.

What's the Goal?

This section of the toolkit will help you understand what **Community Resilience** is and why it is important for communities in Roscommon.



Who is it for?

It is designed for anyone thinking about building greater community resilience in their local area. It will help you to identify local resources and partners, develop and support volunteers, and think about how you can use your community space – all to support your community.

It Can be Led by

Community groups, voluntary organisations, town teams, local leaders, emergency responders. The toolkit is designed with the following Values and Principles at its core:

Psychological First Aid Approach (PFA)

This is a practical and supportive approach to help people experiencing distress after a traumatic event. It is commonly used by emergency response and aid organisations to support the wellbeing of communities. It involves paying attention to people's reactions, listening to their concerns and offering practical assistance to help meet immediate and basic needs.

Equity and Inclusion

This is vital to ensure that the increasing diversity of the communities in Roscommon is recognised and supported. Inequalities in our society mean that these emergencies affect differing people in different ways. As we prepare and adapt for challenges we should ensure that we do so in a way that supports everyone.

Groups include

- Those with disabilities, sensory impairments or mental health conditions
- People living in poverty
- Socially isolated people
- Homeless people or those in temporary housing
- Those with limited ability to speak, read or write English.

Community Empowerment

This is a process where by groups are enabled to gain the ability, resources and skills necessary to make decision, problem solve and improve their lives through addressing challenges and advocating for their needs.

Connection with Nature and Place

This is vital in its beneficial impact on mental health and wellbeing. This connection is known to increase resilience, regulate emotion and help to nurture our emotional attachment to our natural surroundings. For many people living in Roscommon this connection may also be their livelihood as rural dwellers or farmers. This toolkit is designed with this connection as a key value for wellbeing.

This toolkit is designed to provide a comprehensive guide that can be applied to many differing emergency situations, it is not exhaustive and is aware that CERT's will vary in size, scale and environment. It is laid out in a manner that will allow your CERT to choose the most appropriate response for each situation.



2 How to Use This Toolkit

This guide will help you navigate and complete each part of the toolkit and in turn grow your community's preparedness and resilience.

Part 1 Activities

Scene setting, to give you the context you need to start completing the toolkit's activities and templates.

Part 1 Outcomes

An understanding of Roscommon's climate risks and community action, and an introduction to inclusion principles.

Part 2 Activities

Developing your Community Emergency Plan, following a three phase process supported by key steps and templates.

Part 2 Outcomes

The first draft of your community emergency plan, with all actions, considerations and next steps clearly mapped out.

Part 3 Activities

Suggestions for expanding your community resilience further, including exploring emergency volunteering and community resilience hubs.

Part 3 Outcomes

An understanding of where you might want to focus or what you might want to do next, after completing the toolkit.

Part 4 Activities

Reflecting on your journey, you have time to reflect, capture learnings and actions to take forward with you in your community resilience.

Part 4 Outcomes

A reflection on the toolkit process, enabling you to take further action and be clear about your next steps.

3 Psychological First Aid (PFA) in Community Contexts

PFA for Community Groups

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a humane, supportive response to individuals experiencing distress after a crisis or traumatic event. It is not professional therapy, but rather immediate, practical assistance focused on ensuring safety, promoting calm, and fostering recovery. According to guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Red Cross, PFA can be provided by trained community members who offer respectful and compassionate support without pressuring individuals to talk or relive their experiences.

The Five Key Elements of PFA

The WHO identifies five essential elements of PFA that promote psychological recovery. The first is **Safety**, which involves ensuring individuals are physically protected and feel emotionally secure. This can include guiding them away from dangerous environments or helping them access shelter and basic necessities.

The second element is **Calm**. It is important to help people manage their stress responses by speaking gently, remaining composed, and providing a steady presence. Helping someone take slow breaths or simply being with them can foster a sense of peace.

Connectedness is the third element and focuses on helping individuals maintain or restore relationships with family, friends and community. Social connections are critical for emotional recovery and resilience.

The fourth is **Self and Community Efficacy**. This encourages individuals and communities to take part in their own recovery. People often cope better when they feel capable of taking action, even in small ways.

Finally, **Hope** supports a sense of optimism and belief in recovery. While it's important not to offer false reassurance, encouraging a hopeful outlook and recognizing people's strengths can be powerful.

Culturally Appropriate Adaptation

Cultural understanding is essential when providing PFA. Different communities express distress, seek help, and process trauma in diverse ways. Responders should familiarise themselves with customs, values, and languages that are prevalent within the area. It is also helpful to involve community leaders, such as committees in existence, religious leaders and others, to ensure culturally respectful support.

Training Community Members in PFA

Training community members in PFA involves building their capacity to provide support in times of crisis. The training should begin with an overview of trauma and stress reactions, helping participants understand how people might behave or feel during emergencies. Core communication skills such as active listening, empathy, and respectful engagement are also vital.

PFA training typically follows the 'Look, Listen, Link' model. Participants learn to observe the situation and assess safety (Look), offer comfort and attention (Listen), and connect individuals with services and social supports (Link). Role-playing and scenario-based learning can enhance confidence and preparedness.

Using simple language, local examples, and visual aids can make it more effective. Establishing local peer support teams after training can also strengthen the community's long-term resilience. These teams can continue learning, practicing, and supporting one another through future challenges.

What Will The Local Authority Do?

Major emergency planning is a key responsibility of Roscommon County Council. This plan is under constant review and should be viewed in conjunction with the HSE and An Garda Síochána plans as it outlines the relationships and inter-operability between the services.

The role of Roscommon County Council is to protect life safety by providing a top class emergency service in the form of the Fire service and Civil Defence. Other sections of the County Council will also be required to ensure business continuity and also to ensure the general needs of the community are addressed to the best of their ability in an emergency situation.

In effect, Roscommon County Council applies a systems approach to Major Emergency Management within the county based on the Five Stage Emergency Management Paradigm, which are:

- ✓ **Hazard Analysis / Risk Assessment**
- ✓ **Mitigation / Risk Management**
- ✓ **Planning and Preparedness**
- ✓ **Co-ordinated Response**
- ✓ **Recovery**

In addition while the CERT group is active and supporting the community to manage the identified crisis the local authority will:

- Listen to your feedback, and support identified needs where possible, reasonable or required
- Communicate with you via an appointed member of local authority staff or wider emergency response forum if needed to share up to date information which is accurate and will support in local decision making.
- Support in making connections with other agencies who can provide specialised support such as HSE, Emergency Responders or partner agencies through existing networks and supports
- Provide updates to tools, templates and checklists to support planning, advise of funding streams and administer payments from government departments to support response.
- The local authority will champion your work and learn from your good practice.





Phase 1

Prepare

‘We are stronger together’

STEP 1

Forming a Community Emergency Response Committee (CERT)

Early action on the ground, depends upon local capacity, skills and resources. This is why it is vital to have an established Community Emergency Response Team. Prior planning, using this toolkit, will ensure local response is as effective as possible and that your community can recover speedily from an emergency. Establishing a Community Emergency Response Team & Plan requires voluntary input from across the community while harnessing local knowledge and resources.



Remember YOU are the local experts on your community

To help you identify and establish a CERT consider the following:

- Is this group going to be a new group or is it going to build on an existing group within the community such as parish council, town team or local development committee?
- Identify the strengths and resources that currently exist within your volunteer group that will help to inform what roles people have within the CERT
- It is important to have as diverse a group as possible, as many people as possible within your community should have a chance to get involved. Different people bring different skills, insights and opportunities.
- You could have an open meeting where the community can discuss ideas for the Plan and find out who is interested in helping to create it.

Responsibilities of the CERT will include:

- Risk assessments using the tools provided
- Coordination with local authorities
- Communication planning
- Administration such as Toolkit localisation, record keeping.

Who will take the lead?

It is necessary to identify a CERT Coordinator to take a lead role in organising and taking forward the work of this group and helping to keep up motivation and interest from the community.

- Coordinate the actions of the group and help to sustain motivation in the work of the group
- Link with the Public Participation Network to organise training & skills development identified.
- Represent the group on wider emergency response forums and link with the Local Authority
- Ensure the safety of volunteers through risk identification and clear communication of risks
- Ensure with the support of the CERT that logs and templates are complete to be utilised in an emergency response.

It is important that the person taking on this role has a good understanding of your community, and has the backing and support of community members.



Identify key roles within your community

STEP 2 Know Your Community

Demographics

Understanding the population make up of your local community is crucial for planning an effective community response.

This includes identifying the total population size and its distribution across age groups (children, adults, older people), as different groups may have different needs and vulnerabilities during emergencies.

You will also need to consider language diversity if many residents speak languages other than English, communication strategies and training materials may need to be multilingual.

Pay close attention to vulnerable populations, such as individuals with disabilities, elderly residents living alone, people experiencing homelessness, and those without access to transportation or digital communication. These groups may require additional support during the emergency and should be prioritised in preparedness planning.

It is important to remember the following regarding vulnerable persons:

- People may become vulnerable at any point in their lives and everyone can be vulnerable depending on the individual circumstances at that time.
- Being vulnerable will mean different things to different people.
- The duration of vulnerability can vary and may last beyond the recovery from the emergency.



It is recommended that you compile a register of persons who may require enhanced support as part of your preparedness planning. This will be a live document that you should revisit regularly and update as people's vulnerabilities change.

Geography

The physical layout of the area—whether urban, suburban, or rural—greatly influences emergency response strategies. Urban areas may have higher population density and more complex infrastructure, while rural areas often face challenges with distance and access to services. Identifying hazard-prone zones (e.g., flood plains; wildfire prone areas; areas of forestry) helps focus CERT efforts where they are most needed. Additionally, using local knowledge to map out or highlight areas with accessibility issues, such as narrow roads, bridges, or isolated communities, is essential to ensure CERT members are strategically located to respond where professional responders may be delayed.



It is recommended that you note areas of risk or concern on a map of the locality as part of your preparedness planning. This can be a live document which can be referred to frequently as part of your response.

Remember often others have completed these mapping exercises before, which you could use and potentially build on to save a lot of time.



Infrastructure

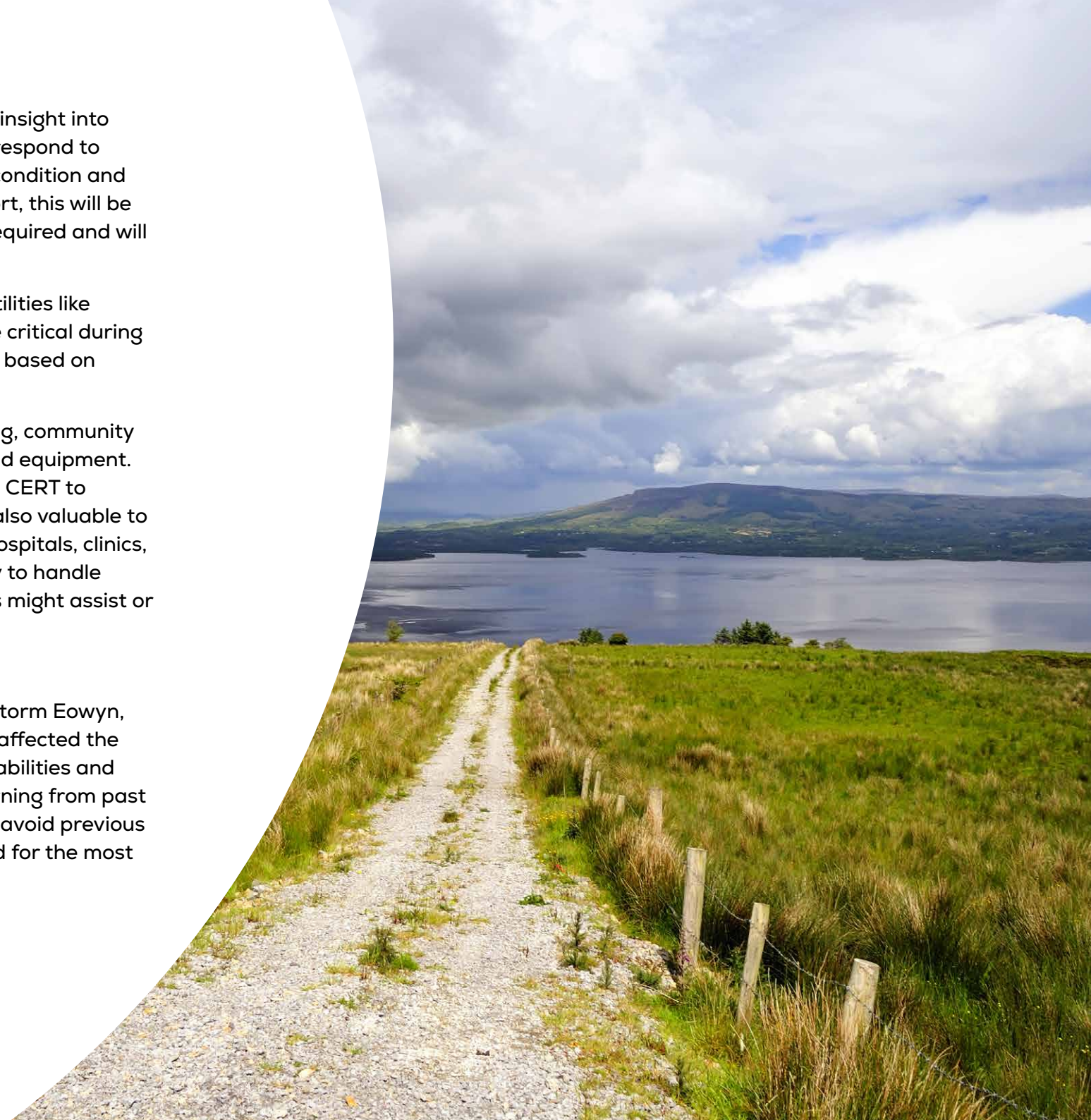
Assessing the local infrastructure provides insight into your community's ability to withstand and respond to emergencies. Key components include the condition and coverage of roads, access to public transport, this will be important in the event that evacuation is required and will help to inform response times.

Evaluate the availability and resilience of utilities like electricity, water, and internet, as these are critical during and after a disaster. This evaluation can be based on previous incidents.

Identify existing shelters (temporary housing, community centres) and their capacity, accessibility, and equipment. This will be a vital component in helping the CERT to identify an Emergency Response Hub. It is also valuable to review healthcare infrastructure, such as hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, to understand their ability to handle mass casualty events and how CERT teams might assist or support them.

Previous Incidents

Reviewing historical emergencies such as Storm Eowyn, COVID response or Ukraine War that have affected the community helps highlight recurring vulnerabilities and informs CERT preparedness priorities. Learning from past events helps the community to plan better, avoid previous mistakes, and build a CERT that is prepared for the most likely and impactful situations.



STEP 3 Know Your Risks



Flooding



Extreme Weather



Critical Incident

Flooding

Potential Situation

River and flash flooding can be caused by heavy rain, melting snow, groundwater or a combination of factors.

Possible Consequences

- ? Serious damage to residential & community property, infrastructure, farm land and recreational space.
- ? Risk to life of animals and people.
- ? Travel Disruption through closed road or public transport networks.
- ? Telecommunication interruptions .
- ? Power Outage.
- ? Sanitation concerns from flood water.

Increased Anxiety/Psychological impact in the community as a result of:

- ? Damage or threat of damage to homes, business and community or life.
- ? Economic burden caused by damage or displacement
- ? Isolation from community
- ? Risk to life of themselves, family or livestock.





How do you prepare?

- Identify potential flood risk in your area. (see template)
- Be alert for advance weather forecasting and warnings for your area and agree triggers that will invoke an emergency response.
- Have clear communication protocol for both in person and remote management of the CERT in case flooding prevents travel. (see template)
- Identify resources available in your community that could be used to access people cut off by flooding (e.g. 4x4's, tractors etc).
- Create an emergency contact list to include local healthcare providers, GP's, primary care centres, emergency services, civil defence, community wardens (see template)
- Create a list of vulnerable people in your community who may be at higher risk of being affected by this emergency. (see template)
- Identify emergency accommodation options for those whose homes may be affected.
- Ensure resources are available to open Community Support Centre. (see template).



How do you respond if this occurs?

- Convene a CERT meeting remotely or in person dependent on extent of flooding
- Ensure Safety First by accounting for all members of the CERT and wider community
- Assess immediate threats and hazards with the support or guidance of the emergency responders
- Keep up to date on information being shared by Met Éireann on situation and precautions required
- Maintain regular contact with the Local Authority, Emergency Services, Service Providers and other agencies to share your concerns and support their actions.
- Open Community Support Centre if need is identified to support those affected with access to sanitary facilities, hot beverages, meal preparation or provision, warm space, charging facilities, meeting place.
- Contact Vulnerable People on your register to establish what support they require e.g. pharmacy collections, fuel or food.
- Identify those in need of emotional or psychological support due to the impact of the emergency and encourage them to attend local healthcare professionals if warranted.

Extreme Weather

Potential Situation

An extreme weather event may include

- Heatwave
- Extended Cold temperatures, snowstorm, blizzard
- Wildfire
- Hurricane or severe storm
- Severe drought.

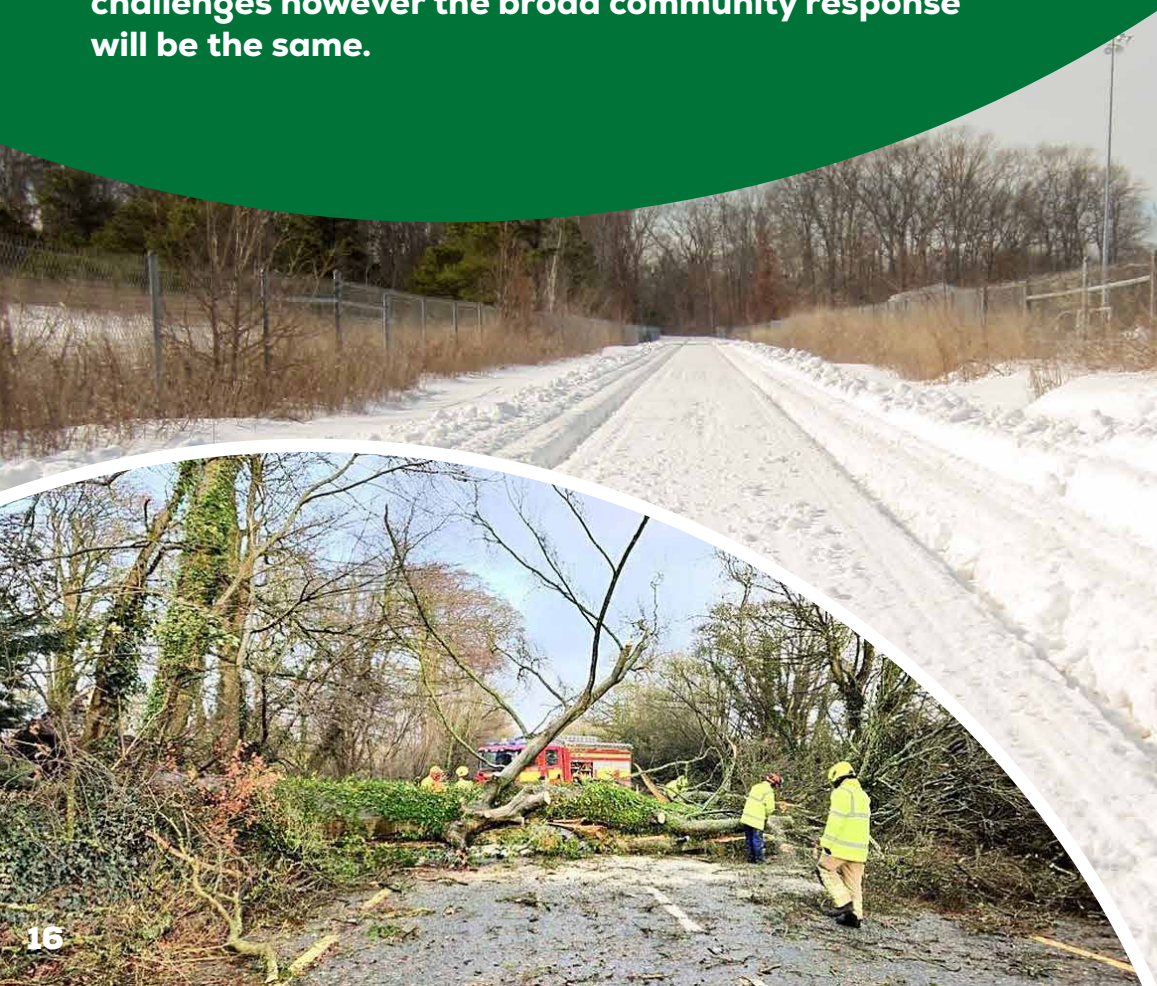
Each of these events will present their own unique challenges however the broad community response will be the same.

Possible Consequences

- ? Risk to life of animals and people, this could include hypothermia, injury, dehydration, burns or breathing difficulties depending on the nature of the event.
- ? Travel Disruption through closed road or public transport networks.
- ? Telecommunication interruptions.
- ? Serious damage to residential & community property, infrastructure, farm land and recreational space.
- ? Power Outage potentially for long periods of time depending on the impact of the event.

Increased Anxiety/Psychological impact in the community as a result of:

- ? Damage or threat of damage to homes, business and community or life.
- ? Economic burden caused by damage or displacement
- ? Isolation from community
- ? Risk to life of themselves, family or livestock.





How do you prepare?

- Be alert for advance weather forecasting and warnings for your area and agree triggers that will invoke an emergency response.
- Have clear communication protocol for both in person and remote management of the CERT in case flooding prevents travel. (see template)
- Localise Resilience Handbook for your community (see template)
- Identify resources available in your community that could be used to access people cut off by flooding (e.g. 4x4's, tractors etc).
- Create an emergency contact list to include local healthcare providers, GP's, primary care centres, emergency services, civil defence, community wardens (see template)
- Create a list of vulnerable people in your community who may be at higher risk of being affected by this emergency. (see template)
- Identify emergency accommodation options for those whose homes may be affected.
- Ensure resources are available to open Community Support Centre (food, water, blankets, first aid kits) (see template).



How do you respond if this occurs?

- Convene a CERT meeting remotely or in person dependent on extent of damage
- Ensure Safety First by accounting for all members of the CERT and wider community
- Assess immediate threats and hazards with the support or guidance of the emergency responders
- Keep up to date on information being shared by Met Éireann on situation and precautions required
- Maintain regular contact with the Local Authority, Emergency Services, Service Providers and other agencies to share your concerns and support their actions.
- Open Community Support Centre if need is identified to support those affected with access to sanitary facilities, hot beverages, meal preparation or provision, warm space, charging facilities, meeting place.
- Contact Vulnerable People on your register to establish what support they require e.g. pharmacy collections, fuel or food.
- Identify those in need of emotional or psychological support due to the impact of the emergency signpost them to relevant healthcare supports or community-based services.
- Continually assess needs and adjust plans as the situation develops

Critical Incident

Potential Situation

There are a number of events that could necessitate the activation of this tool. These include but are not limited to:

- Major traffic accident (e.g., multi vehicle collision, bus crash, train derailment)
- Industrial accident (e.g., chemical spill, explosion)
- Violent event (e.g., active shooter, terrorism)
- Outbreak of Infectious disease in humans or animals.

This tool can be used for any event that negatively impacts a community as deemed necessary by the community themselves or the CERT.

Possible Consequences

- ? Injury from minor to severe or loss of life.
- ? Psychological trauma within the community as a result of the incident will be a significant factor.
- ? Panic, misinformation and confusion about the incident or accident and it's impact.
- ? Displacement of residents if property has been destroyed or damaged.
- ? Damage to homes, infrastructure, or businesses.
- ? Disruption of essential services such as power, water or communication in larger scale incidents.





How do you respond if this occurs?

- Ensure Safety First by accounting for all members of the CERT and wider community
- Assess immediate threats and hazards with the support or guidance of the emergency responders
- Share verified information via trusted communication channels
- Identify those in need of emotional or psychological support due to the impact of the emergency and signpost them to relevant healthcare supports or community-based services.
- Open Community Support Centre as a place to congregate and consider setting up appropriate activities for the affected families that foster return of normality such as play and recreational activities for the children, support groups for adults, rituals and memorial ceremonies
- Continually assess needs and adjust plans as the situation develops.



How do you prepare?

- Create an emergency contact list to include local healthcare providers, GP's, primary care centres, emergency services (see template)
- Localise Resilience Handbook for your community (see template)
- Create a list of vulnerable people in your community who may be at higher risk of being affected by this emergency (see template)
- Ensure that CERT personnel are familiar with communicating using key psychological phrases and that trauma-sensitive messaging is used in all information developed.
- Ensure resources are available to open Community Support Centre (food, water, blankets, first aid kits) (see template).

Community Support Centre (CSC)

Community Support Centres can play a vital role in supporting communities and in building resilience. Your community may have a thriving community centre or club house already in place that is the centre of your community activity and is familiar to those living in the area.

A Community Support Centre should be a premises situated within the local community that is activated rapidly to support the people based in that community or a neighbouring community in a time of need. The primary purpose of a Community Support Centre is to provide a safe place where basic welfare services can be provided by volunteers to any impacted people within their community.

The CERT should assess the suitability of an existing community building to act as a Community Support Centre in the event of a crisis. The CSC should be capable of opening either for designated periods on a daily basis or be available on longer term while the community is recovering to ensure that basic needs of the community is met.

Some basic requirements would for a Community Support Centre would be

- An established volunteer group that has control of the use of the proposed CSC premises with whom the CERT can liaise. Ideally a member of this group would be part of the CERT
- Large hall/room to allow people to gather
- Tables and chairs
- Premises should be able to accommodate people with mobility difficulties
- Premises should have an adequate heating system
- A serviced kitchen or kitchen area with facilities to provide basic refreshments such as tea/coffee, soup, sandwiches, Ready to Eat Meals etc.
- Toilets and washroom facilities
- Wi-Fi services that are easily accessible to people using the premises
- Extension cables to enable people to charge devices
- A private space or additional room that can be utilised where necessary for nursing mothers, receiving medication or people needing privacy to talk to a member of An Garda Síochána, etc.

In addition, there are additional requirements that may influence whether a Community Support Centre is suitable to be established in response to an emergency.

- An uninterruptible power supply. In the event of a disruption to the electricity supply, the Community Support Centre may be required to assist people who have no power. Only premises that have access to power would be suitable in these instances; having premises that can utilise an independent power supply (i.e. a generator connected to the building) to provide power would be very beneficial and is a desirable feature.
- Showering facilities (while this facility may be present, it may not be available where the emergency has impacted water supply or where generators are in use)
- Car parking adjacent to the building.



Phase 2

Act

‘We are stronger together’

With all the components of your Emergency Response Plan in place, it's time to bring them together and focus on action. This means not only activating the plan but also testing it, learning from real outcomes, and refining your plan as you go.



Remember: Regular review is essential to ensure the plan remains relevant, effective and up to date.

When Should You Activate Your Plan?

Triggers that need to be considered for Activation include:

- There has been a Met Éireann weather advisory at Red Level Warning for your area.
- You have identified an emergency situation within your community such as industrial accident, major emergency or prolonged power or water outage for example.
- You have requested by your local authority or by emergency responders to activate the plan to support an ongoing situation.



It is important to agree on clearly defined and understood triggers for your plan. This will aid your CERT in making a decision to activate the plan for your community safety and recovery.

Who Should We Inform that we have activated our plan?

- It is important that ahead of your plan activation that you share the plan with community groups, local agencies such as schools, primary care centres, volunteer centre and partner organisations for example.
- You can share your completed plan with the local authority on community@roscommoncoco.ie for their information in the event of a local activation.
- Once you have decided to activate your plan it is important to inform
- Emergency services: do not assume that someone else has advised them of the emergency in your area if there is a threat to life, property or a major incident
- Inform Roscommon County Council that your plan has been activated and keep them updated on the situation and support that you may require
- Your local community should be informed using your communication cascade that the CERT is now active and responding to the situation.

Communication

Timely and effective communication amongst the CERT and to the wider community and support services is a vital element of your emergency response and will have huge impact the recovery of those impacted as a result.

In using a psychological first aid approach it is important to consider the following in developing your communication tool for your CERT.

✓ **Effective Channels for Communication:**

- Use of Phone trees to prevent duplication of calls and maximising timely communication,
- Use of community noticeboards in your hub for key messages that the community need to ensure consistent messaging
- Use of local radio to share message with people who are housebound including Shannonside FM, Ros FM, Ros FM
- Use of loudspeakers to share information with large groups.

✓ **Consider communication when digital networks fail**

Through use of 2-way radios, door knocking by community wardens etc. to share messages and assess the situation.

✓ **Pre-drafted emergency messages**

Using trusted messengers or social media platforms in easy to read format using inclusive language and translated into languages of those residing in the area where possible.

✓ **Psychological Impact**

Be mindful of the psychological impact of the unfolding situation on individuals when sharing information use **Trauma-sensitive messaging**.

What is Trauma Sensitive Messaging?

Trauma-sensitive messaging is a way of communicating that acknowledges people may be experiencing fear, stress, or past trauma. It uses calm, clear, and supportive language to share information without causing additional harm, panic, or distress.

Why this works:

- **Calm & reassuring tone:** avoids panic inducing words .
- **Acknowledges emotions:** validates fear without amplifying it.
- **Simple, clear instructions:** promotes safety and grounding.
- **Empowerment:** reminds people they can act (move to safety, breathe).
- **Connection & support:** emphasizes they are not alone and that help is close at hand.

Sample Trauma-Sensitive Emergency Message:

"We know this situation is frightening. You are not alone. Help is on the way, and trained responders are nearby. Please move to a safe place if you can and check on those around you if it feels safe to do so. Take slow breaths. Support is available and we will continue to share updates as we learn more."



Your Volunteers

Preparing Volunteer Roles in Emergencies.

Before an emergency arises, it's important to consider what part you and your volunteer team will play. Volunteers can contribute in a variety of ways, such as:

✓ Guidance and Direction

Volunteers who know the area well and services can help people find shelter, community hubs, and signpost support services.

✓ Listening and Reassurance

Sometimes the most valuable help is simply listening to people who are upset or anxious, and then linking them to the right support.

✓ Hands-On Support

Helping with the organisation of donations, setting up or maintaining the community hub, and providing practical assistance.

✓ Team Coordination

Experienced volunteers can act as leads, supporting smaller groups and ensuring tasks are managed effectively.

✓ Administration and Enquiries

Providing support over the phone or in person to answer questions from concerned residents and direct them to the right information.

During an emergency, it is essential to activate and guide your volunteers effectively. Good preparation ensures everyone is ready for their role so please ensure that as many people as possible access the preparation training.

In advance, you should have already outlined the tasks and responsibilities required for those willing to give their time and support.

As a CERT managing volunteers in an emergency, there are several important points to keep in mind.

It is also vital to ensure that you have procedures in place to manage the safety and welfare of those who are volunteering.

This could include

- Health and Safety Statement for your CSC
- Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding policy
- Ensuring community hub has adequate insurance in place
- Access to Person Protective Equipment for those who require it.



Volunteer Guidance Checklist:

- ☐ Provide volunteers with a briefing on the situation and remind them of safeguarding, lone working, health & safety, and other relevant policies.
- ☐ Confirm that each volunteer understands the role they are expected to perform.
- ☐ Reinforce that no one should feel pressured to volunteer if they believe it is unsafe.
- ☐ Promote a culture of openness where volunteers can share concerns and ask questions.
- ☐ Clearly explain the communication and escalation process for raising issues and seeking support.
- ☐ Encourage volunteers to take on only the tasks they feel capable and confident to complete.
- ☐ Limit shifts to a maximum of 4- 6 hours and ensure volunteers, including yourself, take regular breaks.
- ☐ Encourage a buddy system so that volunteers work in pairs for safety and support.
- ☐ Regularly check in with volunteers to monitor wellbeing and progress.
- ☐ Remind volunteers that they are not expected to act as enforcement or security.
- ☐ Express gratitude and highlight the positive impact of their contribution.



Always Remember: If volunteers are not following guidance and instructions, you may ask them to step back. Safety must always come first.

Emergencies often attract additional offers of help from people outside of your trained volunteer group. These 'spontaneous volunteers' can be valuable, but it is important they follow existing procedures and policies.

Checklist For Getting Started

Tools & Templates

1 ☐ Emergency Contact List

2 ☐ Community Vulnerable Persons Register

3 ☐ Community Skills & Resource Assessment Template

4 ☐ Communication Cascade Template

5 ☐ Household Resilience Handbook

6 ☐ Community Support Centre Checklist

7 ☐ Committee Meeting Template

8 ☐ HSE Psychological Support

1. Community Emergency Contact List Template

Template

Page 1 of 2

Community Name: _____

Prepared by: _____

Date Prepared: _____

CERT Team Members

Name	Role/Position	Phone Number	Email Address	Availability Notes
	Coordinator			
	Communications			
	First Aid			
	Risk Assessment			
	Hub Preparation			
	Community Warden			
	Volunteer Coordinator			

Emergency Services

Service	Contact Name	Phone Number	Alternate Number	Notes
Garda Station				
Community Garda				
Ambulance				
Fire Station				
Mountain Rescue				
Pastoral Care				

Local Hospitals & Primary Care Clinics

Facility Name	Address	Phone Number	Emergency Line	Notes

Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

Key Suppliers & Service Providers

Service	Contact Name/Company	Phone Number	Service Type	Notes
Generator Hire				
Catering Services				
Plumber				
Electrician				
Undertaker				
IT Support				
Tree Surgeon				
Groundworks				

Other Important Contacts

Organization/Agency	Contact Name	Phone Number	Email/Website	Notes
Local Authority				
ESB Networks				
Uisce Éireann				
Eir / Circet				

Documentation & Notes

Additional Notes or Procedures:

Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

2. Community Vulnerable Persons Register

Template. Consider compiling member of your community who may require enhanced support to this list.

[illegible]

Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

3. Community Skills & Resource Assessment

Template

Community Name: _____

Prepared by: _____

Date Prepared: _____

Section 1: Community Skills Inventory

List individuals in the community who possess critical skills that could be valuable in an emergency situation.

Name	Skill Type	Specific Skill/Certification	Phone Number	Availability	Notes
	Doctor				
	Nurse				
	Paramedic				
	Chef				
	Psychologist				

Section 2: Community Resource Inventory

Identify resources available in the community that could assist in response and recovery efforts.

Resource Type	Owner/Contact Name	Location	Phone Number	Notes
Community Organisations				

Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

Section 3: Special Equipment Inventory

Include any specialized equipment that may be useful during emergencies.

Equipment Type	Owner/Contact Name	Location	Condition/Status	Notes
Generators				
Heaters				
4 x 4's				
Excavator				

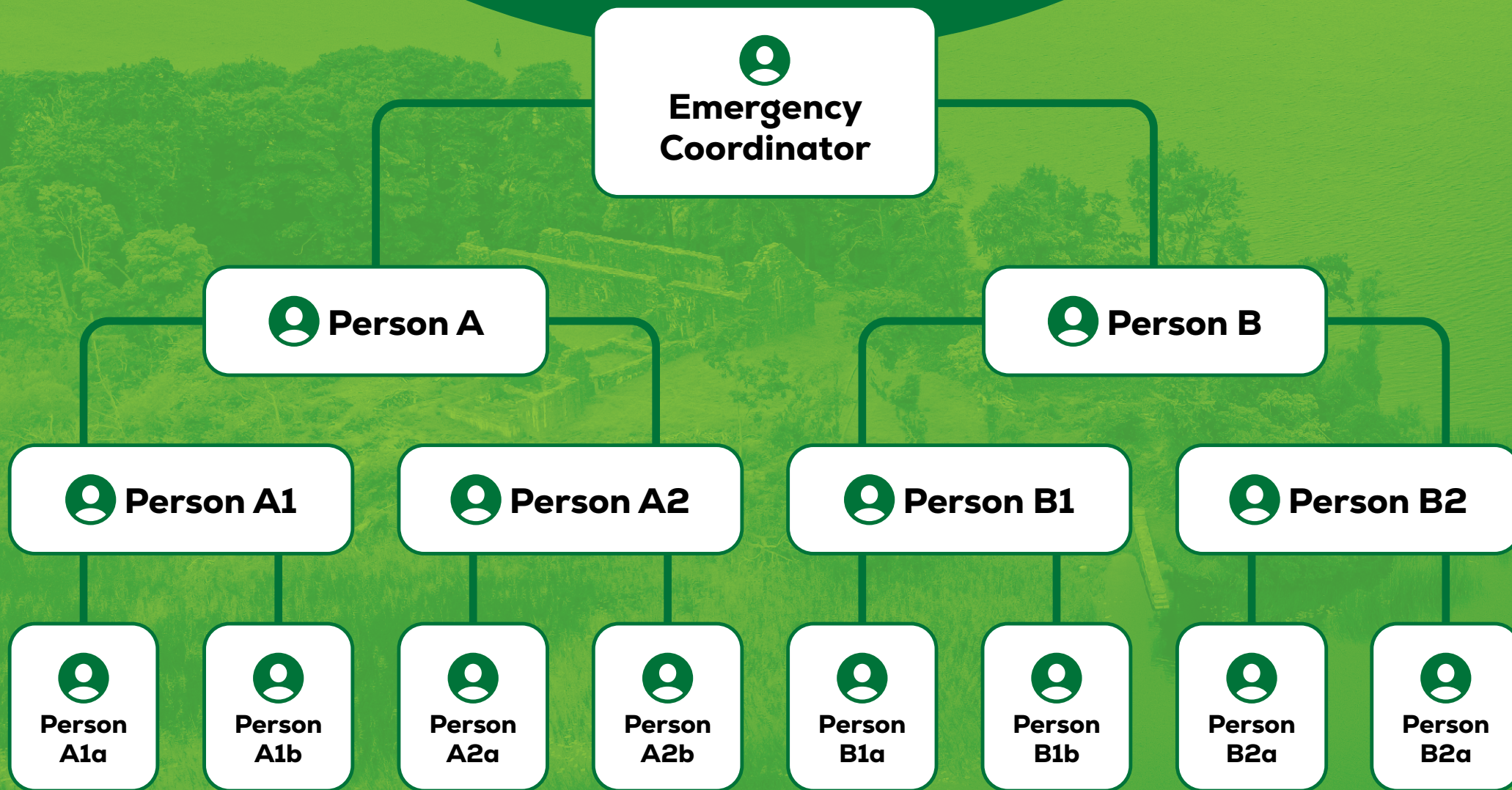
Section 4: Notes and Comments

Additional observations, recommendations, or important information:

Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

4. Communication Cascade Tool

Emergency Response Telephone Tree
(2 Members for Person)



Please ensure that all information is held in accordance with your group/organisation's Data Protection Policy and that consent has been received to hold individuals contact details.

5. Household Resilience Handbook

Roscommon Emergency Support

Roscommon Emergency Support Line will be activated by Roscommon County Council for vulnerable people after storms, floods, fires or County wide emergencies if it is deemed necessary.

- Call if you need help with access, welfare (including animals), evacuation, or vital services needs
- Report outages (power, water, etc.) to your utility provider.
- For Emergency Medical Needs dial 999/112

Roscommon Alerts

Roscommon Alerts keeps you informed with free community alerts via mapalerter.ie

- Local updates via app, SMS or email
- Choose your local text alert during sign up

Sign up at www.mapalerter.ie

My Eircode is:

My MPRN is: 10

Roscommon Support Numbers

- Roscommon County Council: 090 663 7100
- Westdoc: 0818 360 000
- Caredoc (North Roscommon): 0818 365 399
- Intreo: 0818 405 060
- West Be Well: info@westbewell.ie
- Esker House Women's Refuge and Support Service: 090 6474 122
- ESB Networks 24/7: 1800 372 999
- Uisce Éireann: 1800 278 278
- Gas Networks Ireland: 1800 205 050
- Gardaí / Fire Service / Mountain Rescue: 999 or 112

Storm Kit Checklist



☐ Bottled Water



☐ Food



☐ Baby supplies



☐ Stocked-up
First aid kit



☐ Spare batteries
for a torch



☐ Camping stove /
gas canister



☐ Battery Radio



☐ Pet supplies



☐ Toiletries



☐ Hot-water bottle



☐ Phone power bank

Vulnerable Customers

If you rely on electricity or water for medical needs, or need help communicating with service providers due to age, disability, or health reasons, you can self-register as a vulnerable customer with your network provider to access extra protections.

Community Resilience

Even if you're not currently vulnerable, situations like prolonged outages can change that. Communities are encouraged to support each other by keeping a list of vulnerable neighbours. You can also ask to be added to a neighbour's list.

Name:

Address:

Name:

Address:

Name:

Address:

Name:

Address:

Lions – Message in a Bottle

The Lions Clubs "Message in a Bottle" helps emergency responders quickly access your medical details, stored in a bottle in your fridge. Available at Roscommon County Council events.

Community Support Hubs

In the event of an adverse event, Roscommon County Council will activate Community Support Centres (CSCs) across the county in each Municipal District area. These CSCs will provide charging facilities, hot drinks, a warm environment, and opportunities for social interaction and support.

6. Community Support Centre Set-up Checklist

Core Requirements

- Established volunteer group with control of premises use
- Large hall/room available for community gatherings
- Adequate number of tables and chairs
- Premises accessible for people with mobility difficulties (ramps, wide doors, etc.)
- Adequate heating system for comfort and safety
- Serviced kitchen/kitchenette with facilities for basic refreshments:
 - Burka Boiler
 - Stove or Heat source for serving food
 - Fridge
 - Storage for dry goods
 - Sink/Dishwasher
- Toilets and washroom facilities in working order
- Wi-Fi services that are easily accessible to all users
- Extension cables and sockets for device charging
- A private room/space for:
 - Nursing mothers
 - People receiving medication
 - Private conversations (e.g., with An Garda Síochána, psychological supports).

Additional/Desirable Features

- Uninterruptible power supply (UPS):
 - Connection to independent power (generator or battery backup)
 - Ability to maintain power during outages
- Showering facilities (if water and power supply permit use)
- Adjacent car parking for community and responders
- Identified external smoking/vaping area.



7. Community Emergency Response Meeting: Agenda & Minutes Record

Date:

Time:

Location:

Chair:

Welcome & Introductions

5 minutes

- Opening remarks
- Introductions/ Attendance/ Apologies

Meeting Objectives

5 minutes

- Outline purpose of the meeting
- Confirm key outcomes to be achieved today

Situation Update

15-20 minutes

- Summary of current emergency context (e.g., weather, power, flooding, etc.)
- Updates from local authority/emergency services/service providers.
- Report from volunteer groups.

Community Support Centre Readiness

20-25 minutes

- Status of identified hub premises (Template 6)
- Facilities available (heating, toilets, kitchen, Wi-Fi, accessibility, etc.) (Template 6)
- Equipment and supplies status (food, water, medical, power backup) (Template 6)
- Staffing, volunteer availability and allocation of tasks (template 3)
- Gaps/needs identified.

Coordination & Communication

15 minutes (Template 4)

- Communication channels (Wi-Fi, radios, phones, signage)
- Liaison with An Garda Síochána and emergency responders
- Community messaging strategy (posters, social media, local radio) (Template 5) (Template 3) (Template 1).

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

15 minutes (Template 4)

- First aid and medical support arrangements
- Mental health and wellbeing support (Template 8)
- Security and safeguarding procedures

7. Community Emergency Response Meeting: Agenda & Minutes Record (continued)

Page 1 of 2

Logistics & Resources

15 minutes

- Transport and mobility considerations
- Supply chain & partnerships (local shops, community organisations, national agencies)
- Car parking, smoking/vaping areas, EV charging

Action Items & Assignments

10 minutes

- Confirm tasks, responsibilities, and deadlines
- Volunteer rota scheduling

Open Discussion / Community Input/AOB

10–15 minutes

- Q&A from attendees
- Suggestions for improvement

Next Steps & Closing

5 minutes

- Confirm date/time of next meeting
- Summary of agreed actions
- Closing remarks





8. HSE Psychological Support Leaflet

Coping with the Impact of Severe Weather



Coping with the Impact of Severe Weather



Severe weather and the upheaval it causes in your home or business can be very distressing. It can come as a great shock and give rise to a range of emotions.

This leaflet outlines a few suggestions which may be helpful to you and your family during this difficult time.

Severe weather and the upheaval it causes in your home or business can be very distressing. It can come as a great shock and give rise to a range of emotions. The leaflet outlines a few suggestions which may be helpful to you and your family during this difficult time.

Psychology Department

Community Services Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Common reactions following severe weather:

- **Shock or disbelief** at what has happened, feeling numb or unreal.
- **Anxiety/Fear:** Worry about a range of practical issues, including finances, future housing, and whether you will be able to cope.
- **Sadness/Loss:** Distress at seeing a home or business damaged; loss of treasured possessions; and less sense of security and safety within one's home.
- **Flashbacks:** You might have repeated and vivid memories of the event which suddenly come into your mind for no apparent reason.
- **Anger** at what has happened; at the senselessness of it all or "Why it happened to me?" You may become more irritable than usual and your mood may be changeable.
- **Physical symptoms** such as aches and pains, tense muscles, headaches, upset stomach, etc.
- **Loss of sense of normality,** safety and predictability and a feeling of "the world as we know it" being changed.
- **Sleep problems** including getting to sleep, waking in the middle of the night, nightmares. Exhaustion and over-fatigue can set in following severe physical and psychological stress.
- **Problems with thinking,** and concentrating, or remembering things.
- **Strains in relationships may appear,** as everyone is under stress and there is a disruption to normal routines. On the other hand, new friendships and a stronger sense of community may come into being.

Everyone will not experience all of the reactions to the same degree and, in most cases, these reactions will be temporary. If you were already experiencing stresses or problems before the severe weather, this crisis could be a particularly difficult time for you.

What may help at this time:

- **“It’s normal to feel this way”:** Remind yourself that your reactions are normal in a situation like this and will lessen and pass in time. Think of times when you overcame difficult situations in the past and reassure yourself you can do it again.
- **Make a plan:** Make a list of what you need to do and getting in touch with relevant services can often help people to feel more in control. At a time of high stress when you are out of your normal routine, it is easy to lose or forget things. Keeping all documents related to the severe weather together and making brief notes of any conversations with agencies can be helpful e.g. insurance company.
- **Talk about it:** Talk about what happened and sharing information and experiences with others usually helps you manage your feelings and can also help deal with practical problems.
- **Get back into routine:** Try to get back into a routine where possible. You may need to gradually introduce yourself to tasks that seem overwhelming (e.g. the cleanup, sorting out work affairs). Take it one step at a time.



Self-Care

- Eat regular meals. Try to eat something even if you do not feel like eating.
- Try to get back into a regular sleep pattern. If you cannot sleep, get up and do something until you feel tired.
- If you feel under stress or anxious, take some deep, slow breaths to help your body to relax and to calm your mind.
- Get some physical exercise to help “burn off” tension and anxiety and help lift your mood.
- Do something enjoyable for yourself and / or with the family even if you don’t feel like it. In times of stress, we all need to do something we enjoy.
- For some people, prayer, faith and spiritual reflection may be helpful at this time.
- Be careful with the use of alcohol, tranquilizers or other medications. Sometimes people drink alcohol to deal with or forget about problems but this can make you feel worse as alcohol is a depressant.
- During a stressful time, people often smoke more than usual and take more caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee, and certain fizzy drinks). Try to take these stimulants in moderation, because they can contribute to anxiety, agitation and sleep problems.

Accidents

Accidents are more common after stress, please drive more carefully and be careful around the home and when using machinery.

Working Together

Communities, families, and neighbours provide vital practical and emotional support during times of crisis. Stay connected, keep offering help and don’t hesitate to ask for support when you need it yourself.

Helping Children Cope

Similar to adults, children can also be upset following severe weather. They may be frightened by the severe weather itself, or be upset by disruptions that it might cause in their daily routines.

It is not unusual for children to show changes in behaviours, such as becoming more easily upset; getting angry; being afraid to sleep alone; difficulty separating from parents; behaving as they did when they were younger (e.g. thumb sucking, bedwetting); physical symptoms; concentration difficulties. They may also want to continue talking about the severe weather and show “weather-related” themes in their play. Younger children may also feel guilty that they “caused” the severe weather because of some previous behaviour.

- **Talk to your children** about the severe weather and plans for the future. Let them share any worries or fears with you. Reassure them about their own and their family’s safety.
- **Children may need more physical contact** and cuddles at this time. Don’t worry if they want to sleep in your room at night – they may need this extra security for a little while.
- **Do keep to normal routines** and activities where possible, e.g. going to school, meal and bedtime routines.
- **Young children may not have words to describe their feelings**, but they can work through them in imaginative play, drawing and painting.
- **Give children something productive to do** appropriate for their age e.g. help with cleaning up.

Support Services:

For information on practical/financial support, contact the Local Coordinating Group in your council:

Mayo

Email: community@mayococo.ie

Tel: 094 9064660

Roscommon

Email: customerservice@roscommoncoco.ie

Tel: 1800 637100

Galway

Email: customerservices@galwaycoco.ie

Tel: 091 509000

If after several weeks you or a family member continue to feel stressed and overwhelmed, and your mood or feelings disrupt your everyday life, consider making contact with the following services:

- **GP/Public Health Nurse:** To discuss possible referral to a local community or counselling support or mental health service.
- **The Samaritans** 116 123 (24 hours).



Phase 3

Review

‘We are stronger together’



Review

To allow for debriefing and community healing to take place after the event as well as to review, reflect and examine what worked well and what could be improved it is important to utilise a structured process to review the emergency response.

It may begin as an informal gathering allowing people to chat through their experience in an unstructured way and share their own personal views with each other. This will help to create a relaxed and connected space where open discussion in a structured way would help to ensure the most valuable learnings are taken away from the experience.

What Worked Well?	What Challenges Were Faced?	Key Outcomes & Impact	Lessons Learned	Recommendations & Next Steps
• Examples of successes (effective communication, strong volunteer turnout, rapid setup of hub, good collaboration).	• Issues or obstacles (supply shortages, unclear roles, limited accessibility, IT/communications problems). • Feedback from volunteers, partners, and community members.	• How many people were supported? • What services/ resources were provided? • Were vulnerable groups reached?	• What should we do differently next time? • What practices should we keep and improve?	• Actions to improve preparedness. • Training or resources needed. • Partnerships to strengthen. • Policy or procedure changes suggested.

Volunteer feedback gathered? Yes ☐ No ☐

Community feedback gathered? Yes ☐ No ☐

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the communities across Roscommon who shared their insight and feedback on their experiences of community based responses in the development of this toolkit. We would also like to thank the agencies and organisations below for their valuable input into publication. We look forward to continued consultation with them to further enhance and develop the toolkit to meet the ever-changing needs of the communities across Roscommon.



**Public Participation
Network Roscommon**



**Healthy
Roscommon**



**Comhairle Contae
Ros Comáin**
Roscommon
County Council



**Cúram Sláinte
Phobail, Iarthair**
ag freastal ar Ghaillimh,
Maigheo agus Ros Comáin

**Community
Healthcare West**
serving Galway, Mayo
and Roscommon



Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil
Ros Comáin
Roscommon Local Community
Development Committee



Your Local Development Company

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**Public Participation
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**Healthy
Roscommon**

Healthy Roscommon

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